

Recreational Trails Program

FY 2007 Grant Application Guidelines

Important Highlights

- **\$1,000,000 Available for Grants for Recreational Trails**
- **Application Deadline: July 1, 2006**
- **Cost-Share Program: 80% Recreational Trails Program Funds; 20% Sponsor's Funds**
- **Suggested Time Lines:**
 - **Application Materials to Biologists: May 13, 2006**
 - **Legal Ad in Newspaper Inviting Public Comment by May 29, 2006**

If you have questions or concerns regarding any aspect of your application, please don't hesitate to call Bob Walker (444-4585) or Steve Gilbert (444-7642) of the Recreational Trails Program for advice.

The Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA21) established the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), which provides for the transfer of federal gas taxes paid on non-highway recreational fuel used in off-highway vehicles to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) administers the RTP funds at the state level, while the FHWA provides program oversight at the federal level. RTP funding is currently made available through the federal program titled, "Safe Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users." The acronym for this program is SAFETEA-LU.

RTP grant applicants (sponsors) can include federal, state, county or municipal agencies, private associations and clubs. RTP grants to sponsors may not exceed 80% of the total of an individual project. This is a reimbursement program. After approval of all required documentation, FWP will reimburse the sponsor for 80% of the actual documented costs incurred. Reimbursement of RTP funds will only be approved for project expenditures incurred after the date of the signed project agreement between the project sponsor and FWP.

Compliance With Existing Laws, Management Authority Regulations, Policies and Ordinances

All projects seeking funding from the RTP Program must comply with existing federal, state and jurisdictional laws, regulations and ordinances. All projects, with the exception of brochures, portable exhibits and displays must satisfy the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Every applicant must complete the MEPA NEPA Checklist found on the official FWP website.

Sponsors should pay special attention to the public-comment requirements at the end of the MEPA NEPA Checklist. Requirements include soliciting public input to the proposed project through a legal ad in a daily newspaper with widest circulation in the immediate project area. The legal ad must run for at least one day. The public comment period must be open for at least 30 days. Please plan your grant application schedule accordingly and start work on this part of the application right away.

Note: Dated MEPA NEPA Checklists and biological review forms are good for two years. If the proposed project is exactly the same as last year's (no variations whatsoever), the MEPA NEPA Checklist and biological review forms from last year may be used with this application

Planning, Design, Feasibility Studies, NEPA Compliance

Federal Highway Administration Guidance will only allow a “small” portion (less than 20%) of a grant to be used for planning, design or feasibility studies associated with a recreational trail project.

Weed Plan

The following are key points required in a weed plan for an RTP project application. Remember that an existing City, County, Forest, or Resource-area weed plan will not satisfy this application. Your plan must be specific to the immediate project area. Ethics or safety education brochures, and portable exhibits and displays do not require weed plans.

1. A map delineating the location of existing (pre-project) weed infestations (by species).
2. A list of control strategies (mechanical, types of herbicide, etc.) keyed to the map and to weed species. Include how these will strategies be implemented.
3. A schedule for implementing controls that indicates when, where, and who will be involved.
4. An indication of who will be in charge of weed control, now and in the future. Describe who will actually implement the control strategies.

Application Limitations

An applicant may submit only one grant application per grant cycle. An application may contain more than one project phase. If the application contains more than one distinct project phase, the applicant must prioritize those phases.

Any applicant with an RTP grant approved prior to 2003 that has not yet completed that project is not eligible to apply for an FY 2007 grant.

Grant Categories

Two separate grant categories have been instituted so that grant applicants with fewer grant-writing resources and smaller projects do not have to compete directly with sponsors from larger communities. The Small Grant category comprises sponsors requesting \$20,000 or less per grant application. The Large Grant category includes sponsors requesting \$20,001 to \$35,000 per grant application.

Sponsors must provide all information requested and submit the application by the July 1, 2006 application deadline. **Late or incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.**



Deadline: Your RTP Application Must Be Postmarked by July 1, 2006!